(b) how much of the quantity was found inferior;

(c) whether the cargo was inspected before loading and if so, by whom; and

(d) what steps have been taken to meet the losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANS PRASAD SINGH): (a) The details of wheat imported during 1997 are as under:—

Country	Qty. (Lakh MT)	Value (Rs. (C&F) crores, prov.)
Australia	13.90	856
Canada	2.66	179
Argentina	0.95	59
	17.51	1094

The entire contracted quantity of 17.51 lakh MT has arrived at Indian Ports by May, 1997.

(b) The imported wheat conforms to the quality requirements under Preven tion of Food Adulteration Act and is fit for human consumption. However, the damaged grains content in the wheat imported from Argentina is slightly above the contractual specifications.

(c) In the case of Australian and Cana dian shipments, the cargo was inspected and certified by the respective Govern ment agencies. In case of Argentina, quality inspection was carried out by Internationally recognised Quality Sur veyors.

(d) No losses have been reported so far.

Tribal Villages Covered by PDS In Karnataka

487. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the villages inhabited by tribals in Karnataka have been covered by Public Distribution System (PDS) as on 30th June, 1997;

(b) if r.ot, the number of villages which are without this facility; and

(c) the time by when these will be covered;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments/ UT Administrations. Central Government procures and distributes the essential commodities in bulk to States/UTs. State Governments are responsible for implementing the PDS. Government of Karnataka have informed that families Below Poverty Line (BPL) have been identified in the State including tribal areas and necessary arrangements have been made for implementing the Targeted PDS in the State w.e.f. 1st June, 1997.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rice Procurement Target and Liberalisation of Rice Imports

488. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in 1996-97 rice procurement target is not likely to be met and Government have decided to liberalise rice imports;

(b) if so, the extent to which rice procurement is likely to fall short of 1996-97 target and the reasons for decline in the rice production;

(c) the estimated quantity of rice to be imported; and

(d) what is the likely impact on the domestic price of commodity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUM-" ER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) The procurement of paddy under price support scheme is totally voluntary in nature, as only the paddy offered by the farmers can be procured: Similarly, the collection of rice under levy scheme also depends on the purchase of paddy made by the..

millers. Hence, no targets are fixed for procurement of rice.

There is no decline in the production of rice in 1996-97 crop year. The procurement of rice for the Central Pool during 1996-97 Marketing Season is progressing satisfactorily and has reached 120.38 lakh tonnes as on 21.7.97 as compared to 98.59 lakh tonnes upto the same date last year.

Government has permitted import of common/coarse varieties of rice and rice with 50% or more brokens freely with a view to augmenting its availability in the country to meet the needs of the common consumers with limited purchasing power. This permission has been given with effect from 27.5.97.

It is difficult to assess the quantity that is likely to be imported by various agencies in the public/private sector. Therefore the impact on domestic prices cannot be predicted.

FCI's Storage Capacity of Foodgrains in Gujarat

489. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Food Corporation of India (FCI) has created storage capacity to maintain the minimum buffer stock of foodgrains in the State of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details of the buffer stock prescribed for the State and the present storage capacity thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to increase the buffer stock as well as storage capacity for Gujarat; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) As on 31.5.1997, the Food Corporation of India is having storage capacity of 9.82 lakh tonnes in Gujarat State. This capacity is considered to be sufficient keeping in view the present level of allocations under TPDS and other Government schemes. There are no State-wise buffer stocking norms.

Rice Sent to Mar'pur by FCI Misappropriated on the way

490. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to slate:

(a) whether rice worth several crores of rupees scheduled to be sent to Manipur by FCI through certain parties in Haryana was misappropriated on the way and was not delivered; and

(b) if so, the details of the irregularities and action taken against officials and non-officials involved in the scandal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The two transport contractors appointed for transportation of foodgrains from Haryana to Imphal (Manipur) had not delivered 4368 MT and 1543 MT of rice valuing about Rs. 4.25 crores.

(b) Two parties namely M/s. Gautam Associates, Mohali and M/s Yazen Ayier & Co., Pehowa, who were appointed as transport contractors for transportation of foodgrains from Haryana to Imphal had not delivered the above mentioned quantities of rice. On the basis of preliminary investigations 6 Astt. Managers and one District Manager have been placed under suspension. FIR has also been lodged against the defaulting contractors for mis-appropriation of foodgrains. The Government has approved the proposal of the Food Corporation of India to refer the case for detailed investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation and FCI has taken action accordingly.

नई सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के कार्यान्वयन हेतु राज्यों की सहमति

491.**श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेब** : क्या खाध और उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) किन-किन राज्यों ने गरीबों को आधे दाम पर, अनाज उपलब्ध कराने की योजना की कार्यान्वित करने के संबंध में सहमति जताई है तथा वे इस योजना की कब तक कार्यान्वित कर देंगे